

Deepwater Capability Replacement Project



The Bell Textron XV-15 Tiltrotor aircraft leaves the deck of the CGC Mohawk (WMEC 913).

ment, training, and operations to provide the most effective and efficient naval and maritime capabilities for the nation.

The National Fleet concept is one of many imperatives driving the deepwater project. The Coast Guard has created a comprehensive and objective program to assess requirements and acquire the assets to ensure that it can continue to meet the nations needs and fulfill its mandate as a unique instrument of U.S. national security. As the largest and most innovative acquisition effort ever undertaken by the Coast Guard, the Deepwater Project will deliver the tools the men and women of the 21st century Coast Guard need to stand an effective and efficient watch on the front line of Americas maritime safety and security.

Interagency Task Force on Roles and Missions

In 1999, to prepare for decisions regarding the recapitalization of U.S. Coast Guard deepwater assets, President Bill Clinton established the Interagency task force on United States Coast Guard roles and missions. The task forces primary goal was to pro-

vide advice and recommendations regarding the appropriate roles and missions for the Service through the year 2020. The White House also directed the task force to give special attention to the Coast Guards deepwater missions. Following nearly a year of extensive research, interviews, and debate, the task force concluded that America truly needs a world-class Coast Guard and that the Service must embrace the future with innovation and rock-solid investment in its people, systems and platforms.

According to the task force, the United States will face a vastly different situation in this new century than it did during the last half of the 20th century. As globalization and Americas burgeoning economic links with the rest of the world increase the volume and value of maritime trade, the oceans and U.S. waterways are also becoming conduits for numerous transnational dangers. U.S. maritime safety and security are under increasing stress from proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug smuggling, illegal migration, international terrorism, over-fishing of important stocks, pollution, increasing merchant and recreational maritime traf-

fic and more. Coast Guard missions will be required for the nation to respond to each of these threats. Obviously, modern, capable assets are mandatory if the Coast Guard is to remain ahead of these challenges.

The Service must execute these missions in the most challenging of operational environments from the Arctic, to the broad expanses of the Pacific, in the North Atlantic, and the Caribbean 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The bottom line from the task force was simple: the recapitalization of the Coast Guards deepwater capability is a near-term national priority.

The Course Ahead

The deepwater project is the largest acquisition project in Coast Guard history. It is an estimated \$9 billion acquisition project that potentially includes small businesses, sub-contractors and giants of the American defense industry distributed throughout the United States. A contract will be awarded to one of three competing teams in January 2002 to begin cutting steel for the delivery of new assets. The fiscal year 2002 budget presents the first major hurdle the Coast Guard needs to clear